

STAFF REPORT
TA OPERATING CORPORATION
BLUE BEACON U.S.A., L.P. AND TEJON RANCHCORP
TRAVELCENTERS OF AMERICA COMPLEX
KERN COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

TA Operating Corporation operates a Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) at its TravelCenters of America complex adjacent to Interstate 5 near Wheeler Ridge, about 15-miles south of Bakersfield in Kern County. Blue Beacon owns and operates a truck wash that discharges wastewater to the WWTF. Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order No. 5-01-002 regulates the discharge from the WWTF.

A staff inspection found the electrical conductivity (EC) of the WWTF's effluent was approximately 5,000 μ mhos/cm. The EC of the supply well is approximately 2000 μ mhos/cm. Between 1996 and 2000, the EC of the discharge consistently exceeded the EC limit in WDRs (i.e., EC of the source water plus 500 μ mhos/cm). An inspection by the Kern County Environmental Health Services found black oil stains on the sides of a storm water pond and sheen on the water surface. Staff issued a notice of violation directing the Discharger to submit a technical report regarding the EC violations and to delineate the extent of contamination in the storm water pond.

The Discharger's investigation found that Blue Beacon truck wash wastewater and brine discharge from the water softening units at the TA complex contributed to high EC. A faulty oil-water separator unit and discharge from an onsite truck maintenance shop had led to oil and grease in the storm water pond.

On 26 January 2001, the Regional Board adopted Cease and Desist Order No. 5-01-003, including a time schedule intended to assure compliance with the WDRs by 15 May 2001.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEASE AND DESIST ORDER

To achieve compliance with the EC limit, the Discharger attempted various alternatives to control excessive inorganic ions; however, none were successful. In 2001, Blue Beacon proposed a reverse osmosis (RO) system to treat its truck wash wastewater prior to discharge to the WWTF. The RO system, imported from the Netherlands, was delayed awaiting clearance by US Customs in December 2001, but was eventually installed in July 2002. The RO treatment system substantially lowered the EC of the truck wash wastewater and the discharge from the WWTF. However, the EC of the discharge was only at or slightly below the limit. In addition, TA had not fully implemented salinity control measures for its discharge.

By a letter dated 19 February 2004 and a facsimile dated 18 March 2005, TA demonstrated that it had implemented Best Practicable Treatment and Control Technology measures for salinity by eliminating water-softening brine from the discharge. The brine is now collected in a portable tank and hauled offsite to a designated disposal facility.

The Discharger removed several tons of sediment from the storm water pond and transported it to a designated waste disposal site. A new oil-water separator unit was installed to capture oil and grease prior to entering the storm water pond. The storm water pond no longer receives any wash down water from the truck maintenance shop. All of the floor and pit drains in the shop have been closed.

Since 2004 the Discharger has been in consistent compliance with WDRs Order No. 5-01-002.